



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

**January 29, 2014 at 4:30 pm
Council Chambers**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Gil Palmer, Chairperson
Ian Kohen, Vice Chairperson
Trena Carter, Treasurer
Kelly Benjamin
Greg Lewis
Richard Gold
Tony McClendon
Annette Barnes

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Rhea Baker-Ipek
John Roberts, Secretary
John Stroh

STAFF PRESENT

Lorraine Smith, Director
Betsy Schuette, Secretary
Aida Ramirez, Deputy Director

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

GUESTS PRESENT

Jeff Logston, City Council Liaison

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Commissioner Carter reported a wrong date at the top of the November 20th minutes showing the date of October 30th. **Commissioner Lewis moved that the November minutes be approved with the amendment of the corrected date. Commissioner Barnes seconded. Motion carried. November minutes were approved.**

TREASURER'S REPORT

Commissioner Carter reported no activity with the Donations Account maintaining a balance of \$6125.74.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

No Report.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

CASEWORK:

The office continues to be busy with case work. The following is case activity updates:

- 9 Intakes, 2 filings, 1 scheduled filing-discrimination in housing (same respondent) with several filings there is a massive amount of documentation to sort through. Complainant interviews are in the process of being scheduled.
- 1 Mediation in process-Sexual Harassment in Employment, John Stroh serving as mediator. Mediation been rescheduled twice due to the weather. Tentatively it has been rescheduled for February 24th with a back-up date of March 3rd.
- 1 Technical Assist with EEOC- Disability in Housing

COMMISSION:

2014 Annual Dinner Planning Meeting

Director Smith reported that the office is busy planning the 2014 Annual Dinner which will be at the Commons, catered by Bistro 310 again. Director Smith reported a keynote speaker has been selected with the public announcement forthcoming. The Annual Dinner is scheduled for April 9th.

2014 Essay and Art Contests

Director Smith reported that staff felt very good about the topic of the 2014 Art & Essay Contest. The anniversaries of the signing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. March on Washington D.C., were used as the impetus for the topics. Deputy Director Ramirez worked on the core of the topic to relate those anniversaries to the children who participated in the Civil Rights movement as part of what was known as the 'Children's March' and the relevance to today for the contest participants. The contest posed the question of what they would march on today if there was a 21st Century March. Deputy Director Ramirez will still be meeting with the teachers at New Tech regarding the Art & Essay topic and get their feedback.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebrations:

Commissioners and staff attended the 2014 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast at North High School. Office staff provided technical assistance in developing the Columbus Civil Timeline for the Breakfast per

the request of the MLK planning committee. Director Smith also provided brief remarks at the Noon Rotary meeting.

Audit and Review Committee:

Chairperson Palmer, Commissioner Barnes, Director Smith and Deputy Director Ramirez attended the quarterly meeting of the Audit and Review committee. Chief Maddox reviewed the activity of the department which he reported had a record number of public contacts. He also reviewed the complaints filed by community members.

OFFICE:

- Deputy Director Ramirez attended the Westlaw training “Tips and Tricks” on researching legal information using Westlaw software.
- CHRC Administrative Assistant Betsy Schuette is working with Todd Dickerson to look at refreshing and revamping our webpage for more effective outreach.
- Betsy attended a mandatory train-the-trainer OSHA training on January 21.
- Deputy Director Aida Ramirez began with her duties on the Commission on November 12. She has already gotten her feet wet with casework and research and is doing very well in the office.
- Director Smith reported changes to the City’s employee insurance premiums have been increased beginning January 2014. There is also a carve-out for spouses if the spouse is carried by their own employer sponsored plan.

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

MACDA (Mayor’s Advisory Council on Disability and Accessibility)

Director Smith reported that the Sub-Committee Community Awareness provided four trainings for the Columbus Police Department on how to interact with people who have disabilities. The Sub-Committee collaborated with Chief Maddox to provide the training to his officers as a part of the yearly officer training. The Committee is also working on a public awareness campaign for March which is Disabilities Awareness month as well as exploring collaborating with Cummins to produce a video short highlighting the successes of people locally who have disabilities but are working in the community. The Committee is also exploring other topics to which they have had 2 meetings with the Communications department at Cummins.

Heritage Fund Outreach Committee:

Director Smith reported since its beginning in 2004 the Welcoming Community initiative the Commissions involvement has been an intricate role. The Welcoming Community grants was launched around a year ago giving several not-for-profit organizations in the community the opportunity to tap into their \$40,000 available for grants. The Committee is running this program again, focusing on arts, culture and design to bring awareness and enhance Columbus as a Welcoming Community.

CITY HALL:

Sean O’Leary resigned from his position as IT Executive Director and will be working at Cummins. Mr. O’Leary had been working with the Commission on how to better log our data and communicate with the community.

UPCOMING:

Tuesday, February 4th at 5:30 pm: Heritage Fund will hold an informational session on its Welcoming Community Targeted Grants program at the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce.

Thursday, February 6th: The Cummins African-African American Affinity Group has invited Director Smith to provide remarks at their Black History Month.

Saturday, February 8th at 7:00 pm: Ivy Tech is having a program in honor of Black History month called “Freedom Is My Home” which will be held at Dancin’ DJ’s located in Fair Oaks Mall. Cost is \$5.00 at the door.

FOR ACTION

SELECTION OF SUB-COMMITTEES

Director Smith explained that as Vice-Chair, Commissioner Kohen makes the appointments to committees. The Nominating Committee will put together a slate of officers, and the Laws Committee will need to select the William R. Laws Award winner. The Human Rights Commission rules call for an

election in February so the Nominating Committee will put together a slate of officers which will be mailed out the week before the regular February meeting where the vote will occur.

Discussion ensued. As part of his duties as Vice-Chair and after asking for volunteers, Commissioner Kohen appointed Commissioners Carter, Lewis and himself as the Laws Award Selection Committee. Vice-Chair Kohen appointed Commissioners Carter and Lewis and himself to the Nominating committee. **Commissioner McClendon moved to retain the same Commissioners as the previous year (Commissioners Kohen, Carter and Lewis). Commissioner Barnes seconded. Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

DISCUSSION

- Commissioner Gold inquired as to the remainder of tasks left to prepare for the Annual Dinner. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Gold also inquired as to the current information regarding the HR3. Discussion ensued.
- Commissioner Lewis informed the Commission that 'Empty Bowls' is a fund raiser to benefit local food pantries and will be at Central Middle School Saturday, February 1st 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. The cost is \$10 for unlimited soups and breads. There is an extra cost for desserts and hand-made bowls can be purchased for \$10 each. A band will be at the event also.
- Commissioner Gold informed the Commissioners that Dance Marathon is Saturday, March 1st.
- Commissioner Palmer informed the Commission that there is a new fund established through Heritage Fund called the African American fund which was designed to help educate and inspire African Americans in Bartholomew County. Discussion ensued.
- Commissioner Barnes and Director Smith felt North High School was very welcoming during the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. breakfast. Discussion ensued.

LIAISON REPORTS

- Chairperson Palmer attended the quarterly meeting of the BCSC Diversity Leadership Committee of which he is a member. BCSC is putting together a Cultural Competency in UDL (Universal Design of Learning) workshop for Administrative staff and teachers. There are a couple of noted individual consultants that will come in and help with that. The workshop will take place February 24th Commissioner Lewis will also attend that workshop. Discussion ensued.
- Commissioner Barnes reported that Dr. Linda DeClue had approached her at the MLK breakfast and asked for the name of young girl who asked Commissioner Barnes to mentor her on a senior project. The project that she was first approved then denied due to the diverse LGBT subject matter. Dr. DeClue stated to Commissioner Barnes that she would speak to the student and get back with the Commission. Discussion ensued.
- Commissioner Lewis stated that he has been unable to attend the CAMEO meetings since he has a conflict with the Dance Marathon meetings. Director Smith reported that CAMEO is having its Retreat the weekend of February 1st. The Commission staff had once served as advisors for a long time but CAMEO has since become independent from Heritage Fund. They invited Director Smith, Tom Harmon and a few other advisors to the CAMEO Retreat.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Carter moved , seconded by Commissioner McClendon that the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried meeting adjourned.